

Comment by Michael C H Jones
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An Australian Defence White Paper should have been released this year 2015. Perhaps it may still be squeezed in by Christmas Day? However as with all recent years' White Papers it is likely to be a truncated domestic-political document narrowly focused on hardware with traditional western warfare emphasis on firepower. The last war won on that basis was against the Germans in Europe and Japanese in Asia some 70 years ago. The US/Australia alliance lost the political war in Korea 1952, Vietnam 1975, and more recently Iraq and now most likely Syria.

Australia's military boffins should read carefully these Chinese military reforms, not only from a defence perspective but very importantly from an administrative understanding. A Great Power is slowly/quickly, depending on your historical mindset, asserting itself globally, step by step on national territory, on regional seas, and on oceans near and far.

The Communist Party of China directs the PRC Government, and the Chinese military - Xi holds the three power positions re General Secretary, Chairman of the Central Military Commission and the least significant President of China. The analogy which Australians find incomprehensible is Bob Carr being promoted from a decade as NSW Premier to General Secretary of the NSW Labor Party - in Chinese terms his least important gig was as Foreign Minister of Australia.

So the Mainland Chinese military is being reorganised and refinanced, cyber-warfare is all the go and protection of global communications disruption capabilities paramount. The China Seas will be quarantined between Japan and ASEAN thus gradually incorporating Taiwan Province. The US is about to be challenged in the Western Pacific, the Indian Ocean sea routes via the Indonesian straits guarded with measures to neutralise the US/Australian aircraft carrier. Even, in partnership with Russia, the Mediterranean is being sailed, and within 20 years/certainly by 2049 agreements signed with countries such as Brazil and South Africa for naval exercises in both the Southern Indian and South Atlantic. China is coming for you North America and Western Europe.

Some might say this scenario has parallels with the Greek, Etruscan and Carthaginian naval confrontations in the Western Mediterranean Sea prior to 500 BC and pre Rome.

As for Australia, the first commercial airliner has just landed in Antarctica, it wasn't Chinese but they soon will be via their six bases. Our historical claim to about 40% of Antarctica is looking increasingly doubtful, and the Southern Ocean will in future decades become an area of naval rivalries. Given military lead-times of 30/50 years for hardware such as Japanese or German submarines the next few Australian Defence White Papers ought to at least mention Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in their indexes.